



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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MOOSE AND "LOW BUSH MOOSE" MAKE NEWS IN ALASKA

Real moose and "low bush moose" are making news in Alaska, it is reported by Fish and Wildlife Service personnel of the Department of the Interior.

The "low bush moose", which actually is only the lowly rabbit, is substituting for caribou meat this winter in the native diet in the Kobuk and Naotak river area north of the Yukon.

For some reason unknown to biologists the migration pattern of the caribou herds in Alaska has changed considerably in the recent past. This winter there were only a few caribou in the lower reaches of these rivers. Hence the natives switched to rabbits, which are reasonably abundant in that area, for the main portion of their diet.

Real moose also are getting attention because only about 100 of them were killed during the past winter by trains on the Alaska railroad. This is a fraction of the usual kill. The low mortality is credited to the light snowfall during the winter months. In periods of heavy snow, the moose prefer to travel along the snow-free railroad track rather than break their own trails through the heavy drifts. Under these conditions, in spite of extreme precautions by the crews, train kill is heavy when great numbers of moose move along the railroad tracks.

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